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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to help parents and other interested persons understand the nature and needs of gifted children, to provide ideas and activities that will nurture gifted children, and to explain the components of the Major Work Program, which is the gifted education program of the Cleveland (Ohio) Public School District. The guide outlines the history and goals of the Major Work Program; and provides information on eligibility; what is expected of both students and parents; reasons for withdrawal of students; referral procedures, and key features; describes the Major Work curriculum at the elementary and secondary levels; and discusses program features such as the Literature Club, scholarship-in-escrow, weighted grades, and accelerated curriculum. The guide also provides an expanded description of the program's features, offers suggestions to improve parent/teacher interaction, explains how to establish a home learning center, and describes how to capitalize on parent/child shared interests. (JDD)

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MAJOR WORK PROGRAM PARENT GUIDE

CLEVELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CLEVELAND, OHIO

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Cleveland Public Schools District is to deliver high-quality educational services which ensure that all students reach their fullest educational potential. The **Major Work Program** is one part of the total educational services of the Cleveland Public School District, and supports the district mission by:

- *Meeting the academic needs of gifted students*
- *Providing high-quality instruction appropriate to the learning styles of gifted children*
- *Providing continuing enrichment beyond the minimum mastery level*
- *Stimulating critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity*
- *Promoting student leadership.*

Parent Guide Purpose

The purpose of this Parent Guide is to provide useful suggestions and explanations. It is hoped that the guide will help parents understand the nature and needs of gifted children, will provide ideas and activities that will help nurture your child, and will explain features of the Major Work Program that will assist you in making appropriate academic choices for your child.

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Characteristics of Gifted Major Work Children

Gifted children generally act and behave like all children their same age. However, they also may demonstrate some of the characteristics listed below which set them apart from other children. They will:

- *Ask lots of questions*
- *Become excited about new ideas*
- *Use an advanced vocabulary*
- *Create new games or stories*
- *Remember facts about many topics*
- *Read widely in a special interest area*
- *Demonstrate a sense of humor*
- *Become impatient with routine activities*
- *Suggest several solutions to a problem.*

Needs of Gifted Children

Some needs of gifted children which must be addressed by the school and supported by the family are:

- *To be loved and accepted as individuals*
- *To develop a positive self-concept*

- *To develop thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills*
- *To recognize the special responsibilities that accompany giftedness in relation to self, family, school, and society*
- *To develop skills to become independent, creative learners*
- *To develop a joy and excitement about learning.*

HISTORY OF THE MAJOR WORK PROGRAM

In October 1921, the Cleveland Public School System began its first program for gifted children at Denison Elementary School where gifted children in grades four, five, and six participated. This program was supported by the Women's City Club of Cleveland. In the summer of 1922, this program, which is often considered the model of our nation, was approved by the Cleveland Board of Education.

From 1921 to 1927, fourteen elementary and two junior high schools were established as centers for gifted children. In the decades of the 1940's and 1950's, the Cleveland Public Schools developed an articulated program for gifted pupils from the primary grades through high school.

Thus, from a modest beginning, the program which at one time was called the "greatest experiment in education," has grown and developed into a program that currently provides enriching educational experiences for over 2,500 children with high intellectual and/or academic ability.

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PARENT/TEACHER INTERACTION

Parents are children's first teachers. Congratulations for the excellent, early preparation you gave your child. However, your continued help is needed.

Major Work students need to recognize that teachers and parents are in partnership to help them succeed. The following suggestions will help improve the home/school relationship.

- *Establish a mutual working relationship with the teacher in order to monitor your child's progress.*
- *Be aware of teacher expectations regarding out-of-school assignments, such as content, frequency, style, and due dates. (Work on long-range assignments should be done in a timely manner, not put off to the last minute.)*
- *Inform the teacher of any conditions which may influence your child's classroom performance.*
- *Make your child aware that you are concerned about school work by establishing standards for quality work done at home as well as school.*
- *Make the teacher aware of your talents or special areas of expertise that may be shared with your child's class.*
- *Attend school functions regularly.*

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Establishing a Home Learning Center

You, as parents can help your Major Work child to succeed in school by creating a learning center at home.

- **Set up a definite study area.** *Be sure the area includes a desk or table and a light, so that it is a pleasant place to study.*
- **Provide necessary supplies.** *Pencils, paper, dictionary, thesaurus, and other essentials should be available so that valuable time is not spent looking for things.*
- **Establish a regular study time.** *Set a time-frame that is adequate for completing homework and maintain the time schedule each day. This will encourage the student to realize that there is a "time to study" whether or not there is assigned homework. (Late evening is not the best time for studying.)*
- **Limit distractions.** *Monitor study time to be sure that your child is concentrating on assignments. This means no radio, television, phone calls, visitors, or snacks!*
- **Review assignments.** *Check assignments each day both before and after your child does them to ensure that they are completed as directed. Review graded papers returned to your child by teachers, to be sure that your child understands why corrections were made.*

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Suggested Home Activities

Children who are gifted need a great deal of mental stimulation—much more than the school alone can provide. Parents can help in this area be developing home activities which encourage creative growth. Below are characteristics of gifted children followed by suggested activities to encourage growth.

- IMAGINATIVENESS

  The simple activities listed here for children to do at home do not require expensive materials, often only paper and pencil.

  - *Write and illustrate a story.*
  - *Write and stage a play.*
  - *Create a circus.*
  - *Create a video soap opera, newscast, or game show.*
  - *Develop a board game.*
  - *Create a card game.*
  - *Develop a newsletter magazine, or newspaper.*
  - *Create a comic book.*
  - *Find answers for "what if" problems.*

- THINKING-SKILLS ABILITIES

  Here are some items that can be bought for children that stimulate thinking skills.

  - Checkers
  - Bingo
  - Crossword puzzles
  - How-to-books
  - Scrabble
  - Jig-saw puzzles
  - Monopoly
  - Chess games
  - Fact cards
  - Card games

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- MULTIPLE INTERESTS

  Activities that children can do to satisfy their many interests are listed below.

  - *Develop a family tree.*
  - *Maintain a journal of events.*
  - *Make a photograph album.*
  - *Chart or graph important information (plant growth, weather data, sports records, etc.).*
  - *Collect inexpensive items of interest (rocks, insects, leaves, etc.).*
  - *Become an "expert" on a topic (dinosaurs, space exploration, automobiles, etc.).*

- PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES

  Children need to develop the ability to identify problems, seek alternative solutions, and test possible solutions. Here are some typical problems that parents and children can solve together. Be tolerant of different or unique solutions your child may propose in the:

  - *Selection of clothes to be purchased for or by the child*
  - *Decoration of the house for holidays*
  - *Delegation of household chores among children in the family*
  - *Length of phone conversations.*

- INVENTIVENESS

  Here are ways that children can use their creativity to develop a sense of responsibility as well as gain an understanding of economics.

  - *Create and sell a neighborhood newspaper.*
  - *Make flyers or invitations on a computer.*
  - *Organize a music group.*
  - *Plant a garden and sell vegetables or flowers.*
  - *Entertain at children's parties—puppet show, magic show, etc.*
  - *Photograph friends, relatives, or neighbors.*
  - *Develop a simple new product.*

PARENT/CHILD SHARED INTERESTS

Gifted children, even at an early age, have a curiosity about many topics or problems. It is important that they have the opportunity to explore new areas and test their own abilities in new and unique settings. The sharing of adult activities is one way parents can help the gifted child to develop talents. It is important to remember, however, that your child needs direction, encouragement, and monitoring to ensure that the level of participation is appropriate for the child's interest and ability.

Reading

Read a book, magazine article, or newspaper feature with your child. After reading the selection, discuss the topic together. Identify areas in the selection of mutual agreement or disagreement. Mention areas from the readings to support the discussion. (Investigate services and programs provided by your local library.)

Hobbies

Include your child in aspects of your hobbies that could broaden his or her interest and knowledge. Such hobbies may include sewing, gardening, hunting or fishing, collecting, photography, or any area of possible mutual interest. Encourage your child to ask questions in order to learn from your knowledge. Don't be surprised, however, if the child decides to investigate a new aspect of the topic on his or her own—different from your area of interest.

Community Services

Participate in a community service project with your child. This may be a church group, hunger-center, neighborhood center, environmental group, or the like. Help your child to understand other people's needs and to value the opportunity of working with people to address a common goal. Encourage your child to contribute to the group—whether it be through giving ideas or physical work.

Athletics

Join with your child in athletics both as active participants and as spectators. Help your child to understand the life-long role of athletics in individual growth as well as

developing team cooperation. Emphasize that winning, record setting, or expert ability need not be the goal of athletics, rather fun, exercise, and diversion from intellectual activities should be the aim.

Career

At an early age, begin to expose your child to a variety of career choices that may suit his or her interest and ability. Explain that the responsibilities of each job require specific education and training. If the employer agrees, invite your child to spend a day at work with you, a relative, or a friend.

Encourage your child to question professionals about the nature of their careers. For example, when visiting the doctor or dentist, the child should ask about the necessary courses to take in school, advantages and disadvantages of the profession, and the like.

Cleveland Area Resources

The Cleveland community is rich in the number of offerings it has available to residents. It is important for you and your child to take advantage of these resources. Because the number of offerings is so great, you are referred to the "Info Pages" included in the yellow pages of the phone book which provide a description of the many cultural and recreational opportunities in Cleveland and the area. Review the opportunities with your child and select to visit those which will not only reinforce but expand your mutual interests. Be sure to include museums, parks, plays, libraries, and the like.

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MAJOR WORK CURRICULUM

The curriculum is the educational program of the school district. It is designed to deliver the educational goals and to use specific teaching methods to accomplish those goals. A description of the Major Work curriculum at the elementary and secondary levels follows.

Elementary Curriculum (Grades 1 - 6)

The scope of the elementary curriculum for the Major Work Program includes the traditional three R's, but the focus of learning is on discovery, enrichment and development of higher-level thinking skills in all subject areas. Encouraging investigation, goal-setting, and problem-solving are key elements of this approach. Stimulation of creative growth and leadership is also emphasized throughout the Major Work curriculum. In addition, a foreign language experience is provided during the upper elementary grades.

Secondary Curriculum (Grades 7 - 12)

The Major Work Program at the secondary level continues to encourage critical and divergent thinking, concept development, independent learning strategies, and opportunities for the development of advanced products related to the subjects studied.

All Major Work students are expected to take the full complement of sequenced, honors courses in science, mathematics, English, social studies, and foreign language, leading to Advanced Placement courses during the senior year. Students, however, may enroll in a minimum of two honors courses and remain in the Major Work Program.

(see next page)

MAJOR WORK/HONORS PROGRAM

Sequence of Courses

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL		HIGH SCHOOL			
GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
English Major Work 7	English Major Work 8	English 1 Honors	English 2 Honors	English 3 Honors	Advanced Placement English
French Major Work 7	French Major Work 8	French 2 Honors	French 3 Honors	French 4 Honors	French 5 Honors
Accelerated Mathematics 7	Accelerated Mathematics 8 (Algebra 1)	Geometry Honors	Algebra 2 and Trigonometry Honors	Advanced Mathematics Honors	Calculus with Analytical Geometry
Science Honors 7	Science Honors 8	Biology Honors	Chemistry Honors	Physics Honors	Advanced Placement Biology
Social Studies Honors 7	Social Studies Honors 8	World History Honors 9	Advanced Placement American Government	American History Honors	American Government Honors
			Advanced Placement American History	Advanced Placement American Government	Advanced Placement American Government
			Advanced Placement European History	Advanced Placement American History	Advanced Placement American History
				Advanced Placement European History	Advanced Placement European History

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FEATURES of the MAJOR WORK PROGRAM

The Major Work Program was initiated within the Cleveland Public School District in the early 1920's as one of the nation's first programs for academically gifted students. Today it continues to strive to meet the needs of contemporary gifted urban youth. Following is a description of key features of the Major Work Program.

Daily Talks *(Grades 1 - 6)*

Daily Talks are research reports prepared and presented by elementary level Major Work students. The preparation of Daily Talks provides students with the opportunity to develop and use research skills appropriate for their ability level. These skills include gathering information, note taking, organizing, sequencing, and developing appropriate visuals to reinforce the topic. Poise and delivery are also developed through Daily Talks. Students are expected to prepare Daily Talks throughout the school year as assigned by the teacher.

Literature Club *(Grades 1 - 6)*

The Literature Club is an organized teacher-guided student-led discussion group. It is designed to increase students' reading comprehension and to provide them with exposure to a variety of quality reading material. Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of basic reading skills, express independent thought, support ideas with evidence, and make evaluations based on clearly defined criteria. Literature Club also encourages students to respect the ideas of others and assume leadership roles through interaction with classmates.

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The Junior Great Book Program *(Grades 2 - 12)*

The Junior Great Books reading series is a collection of outstanding traditional and modern literature. Students in grades two through twelve learn how to interpret what they read. Central to the program is a method of discussion called "shared inquiry." In shared inquiry, students and discussion leaders work together to answer questions that focus on complex levels of meaning in a literary work. Guided by the leader, students develop their own interpretations and support them with evidence from the text. *(Teacher leaders have been trained in courses conducted by the Great Books Foundation.)*

Scholarship-In-Escrow *(Grades 7 - 12)*

For every secondary Major Work/Honors course in which students achieve a final grade of A, B, or C, an additional $10.00 is credited to their Scholar-In-Escrow account.

Weighted Grades *(Grades 7 - 12)*

Students earn one additional quality point for each secondary Major Work/Honors course in which they achieve an A, B, or C as a final grade. This may result in a higher grade point average upon completion of high school coursework and thus increase a student's class rank for graduation.

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Accelerated Curriculum *(Grades 7 - 12)*

The regular coursework in secondary Major Work/Honors courses is completed at a faster rate than that of the regular courses. This provides the opportunity for greater indepth study, individual projects, advanced coursework, and other forms of academic enrichment.

Credit-In-Escrow/Dual Credit *(Grades 11 - 12)*

Students may enroll in local college courses which count for future college credit. The credits earned may also fulfill high school graduation requirements. Courses may be taken via TV, during summer school, or on site at the high school or college.

Advanced Placement (AP) Program *(Grades 10 - 12)*

The Advanced Placement Program offers college-level courses to high school students. AP courses are designed to prepare students to perform well enough on Advanced Placement exams to earn college credit based on their scores. A score of 3 or better on a 5 point scale will qualify students to receive credit or appropriate placement at most colleges and universities. Exams are given each year in May at your child's school. Although there is a fee for the exam, reduced rates are available to qualifying students. The possibility of earning a year of college credit makes the AP exam a worthwhile investment. Be aware, however, that specific college requirements vary.

For further information, contact:

MAJOR WORK PROGRAM
Cleveland Public School District
1380 East Sixth Street, Room 600N
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
or call
(216) 574-8515

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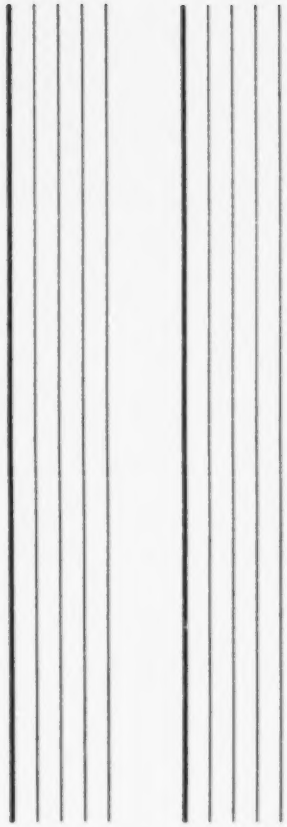

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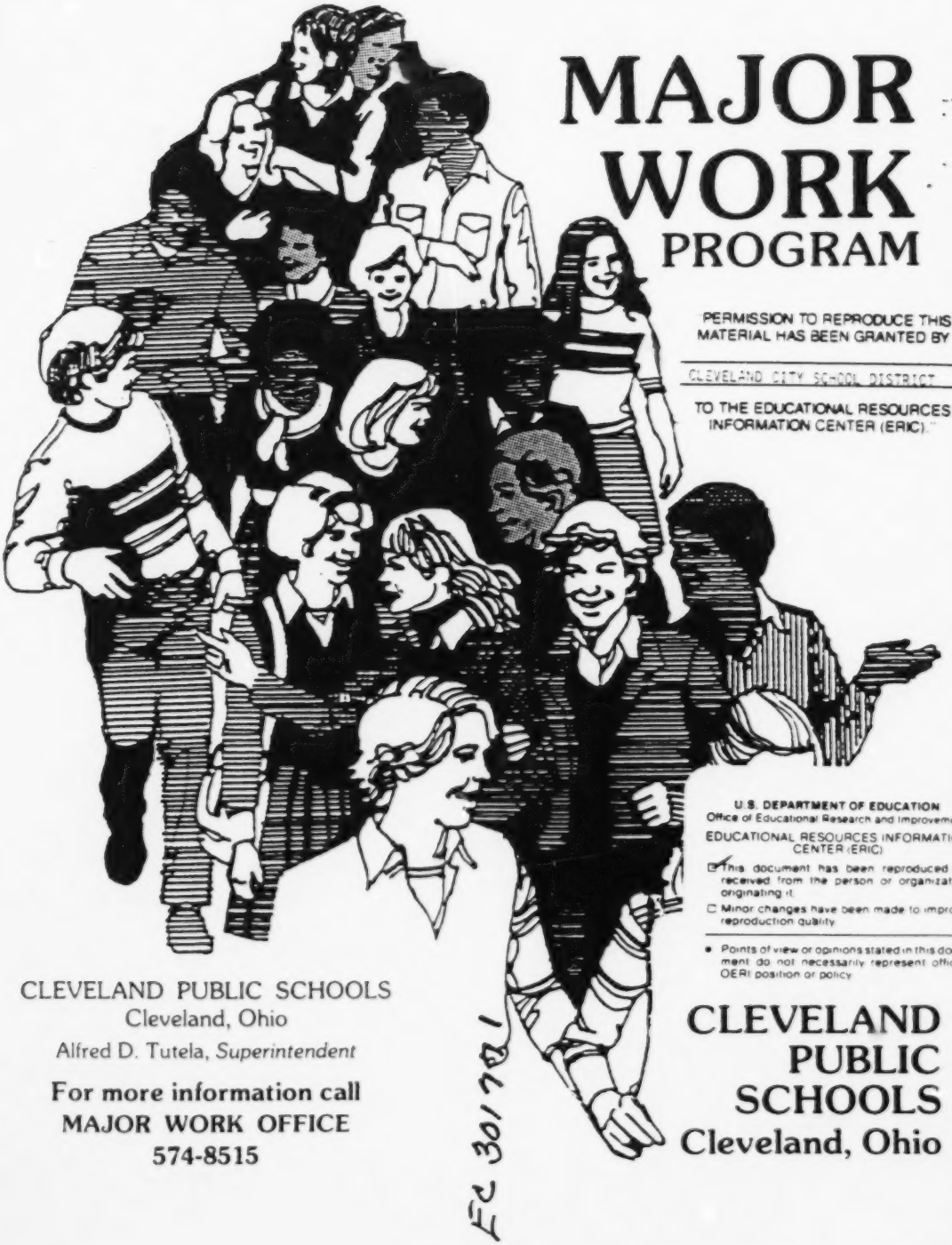

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CLEVELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Cleveland, Ohio
Alfred D. Tutela, *Superintendent*

For more information call
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CLEVELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Cleveland, Ohio

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What is the History of the Program?

In October 1921, Cleveland Public Schools began its first program for gifted children at Denison Elementary School where gifted children in grades four, five, and six participated. This program was supported by the Women's City Club of Cleveland. In the summer of 1922, this program, which is often considered the model of our nation, was approved by the Cleveland Board of Education.

From 1921 to 1927, fourteen elementary and two junior high schools were established as centers for gifted children. In the decades of the 1940's and 1950's, the Cleveland Public Schools developed an articulation program for gifted pupils from the primary grades through high school.

Thus, from a modest beginning, the program which at one time was called the "greatest experiment in education," has grown and developed into a program that provides enriching educational experiences for over 2,500 children with high intellectual and/or academic ability.

What Are the Goals of the Major Work Program?

The Cleveland school district's commitment to excellence ensures that all students have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

The Major Work Program fulfills that district goal by:

- *meeting the academic needs of gifted and talented students.*
- *providing high-quality instruction appropriate to the learning styles of gifted students.*
- *providing continuing enrichment beyond the minimum mastery level.*
- *stimulating critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity.*
- *promoting leadership.*

Who is Eligible?

Any Cleveland Public School student who demonstrates superior cognitive, academic, or creative thinking ability is eligible for participation in the Major Work Program.

Specific eligibility requirements include the following:

- *achievement of above-average grades on report card*
- *recommendation of principal and teacher*
- *performance in the above-average range on achievement tests*
- *performance of 90% or better on the reading and math competency tests*
- *evidence of outstanding achievements and creativity beyond age or grade level expectations*
- *performance in the above-average range on an intelligence test*
- *evidence of emotional stability and social integration*

What are the Program's Expectations of Each Student?

Each Major Work student should demonstrate outstanding academic, creative, and leadership skills within the school setting.

A Major Work student is expected to:

- *complete homework and classroom assignments at a high degree of competence.*
- *participate in analytical and evaluative classroom activities.*
- *achieve above-average grades in academic subjects.*
- *show initiative in expanding and extending classroom learning.*
- *become an independent, self-motivated learner.*
- *demonstrate maturity, self-discipline, responsibility, and respect for the dignity of self and others.*

What are the Program's Expectations of Parents?

The Major Work Program places greater academic demands on students than the regular instructional program. Ongoing parental support is crucial to the success of a Major Work student.

What Happens if a Major Work Student Fails to Continue to Meet the Program Requirements?

Every effort is made to encourage each Major Work student to live up to the program requirements.

However, if a student fails to continue to meet the Major Work requirements, both the student and parents are:

- *counseled by the teachers, guidance counselor, principal, and the Major Work office.*
- *warned verbally and in writing that it is imperative to continue to meet the Major Work requirements in order to remain in the program.*

What are the Reasons for a Student Exiting the Program?

A student may be exited from the Major Work Program and reassigned to his/her cluster school of assignment for any of the following reasons:

- *standardized achievement test scores fall below the above-average range*
- *report card grades fall below a C in academic subjects for two semesters*
- *intelligence test scores fall below the above-average range*
- *parents request student's removal from the program*

Who May Refer a Student for the Program?

A teacher, principal, parent/legal guardian, the individual student, or any other person who is familiar with the nominee's academic potential may initiate the process for nominating a student for the Major Work Program.

A nomination form is completed by the principal and teacher of the school that the nominee is currently attending. For any student who has attended or is currently attending an out-of-district school, the parents/legal guardians must request that the school records be submitted to the Major Work office.

The Major Work office reviews each nomination in reference to the eligibility requirements outlined in this pamphlet. Parents/legal guardians are notified in writing of the student's acceptance or rejection.

How are Students Assigned to Major Work Schools?

Students are assigned to Major Work schools at the appropriate grade level consistent with the district's Assignment and Transfer policy.

What are the Key Features of the Major Work Program?

In addition to the regular graded course of study, Major Work students engage in a variety of educational activities.

ELEMENTARY

- *Independent Research*
- *Foreign Language (grades 4-6)*
- *Junior Great Books*
- *Special Projects*
- *Literature Club*
- *Computer Instruction*
- *Self-contained Classrooms*

SECONDARY

- *Accelerated Curriculum*
- *Honors Classes in Major Subjects*
- *Advanced Research*
- *Junior Great Books*
- *Advanced Placement Classes*
- *Scholarship-In-Escrow*
  Additional $10.00 for grades of A, B, or C
- *Credit-In-Escrow*
- *Weighted Grades*

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